

Northwest Ohio Regional Highlights 2012

Creating Jobs and Promoting Economic Development

Promoting Northwest Ohio's Growing Auto Industry

The auto industry is vital to communities in every corner of Ohio, but especially to those in Northwest Ohio. In advance of the opening of the 2012 North American International Auto Show in Detroit, Sen. Brown joined the United Autoworkers and the Center for Automotive Research in Toledo to reveal new data showing that Ohio added more than 3,000 new auto jobs between 2009 and 2012, and by 2015, Ohio will add more than 3,500 new automotive jobs.



Since the auto rescue, Northwest Ohio has seen new, major investments at the Chrysler Assembly Complex in Toledo and at General Motors' Powertrain plant in Defiance. Chrysler announced that 2011 was the first year it saw net income since 1997, and in the spring of 2012 it reported a 20 percent increase in sales. Sen. Brown applauded this news and credited the company's employees and facilities in Northwest Ohio – as well as the auto rescue – as the keys to its success.

Sen. Brown has been an outspoken advocate for Ohio's auto industry. His office, along with the Board of Lucas County Commissioners, the Workforce Development Agency, and the Source of Northwest Ohio, convened an automotive workforce roundtable in January with Jay Williams, Executive Director of Recovery for Auto Communities and Workers at the U.S. Department of Labor.

Ensuring Workforce Stability at Lima Tank Plant

The Abrams tank is vital to our national security and keeping its production and modernization going is critical to our military readiness and preparedness. Sen. Brown applauded the December passage of the *National Defense Authorization Act* (NDAA), which will keep jobs at the Lima Tank Plant through continued investment in the M1A2 Abrams tank program. The bill contains \$136 million in additional funding for Abrams tank procurement and \$129 million for modernization, which will ensure that the Lima plant can continue to operate at its current levels through Fiscal Year 2013. The Lima tank plant is a key part of Allen County's economy, and the NDAA will help ensure that this remains the case.

Applauding the Return of Locked-Out Cooper Tire Workers to the Production Line and New Federal Resources for Tire Technology

More than 1,000 workers at Cooper Tire & Rubber Company – represented by the United Steelworkers (USW) Local 270 – were locked out of the Findlay manufacturing plant for nearly three months. Sen. Brown urged both Cooper Tire management and the USW to continue to work towards a new agreement, and in February he applauded the ratification of a labor agreement between the two parties.

Sen. Brown visited with Cooper Tire workers in early January and sent several letters to company CEO Roy Armes, urging Cooper Tire to remain at the bargaining table with its employees until an agreement was reached.

In July, Sen. Brown announced a \$6.8 million grant award to Cooper Tire from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s Biomass Research and Development Initiative. As the lead partner in a consortium consisting of two universities, three areas of the USDA, and five companies, Cooper Tire will use these funds to study the use of the guayule plant as a major source of natural rubber.

Urging Full Utilization of Facilities at NASA Glenn's Plum Brook Station in Sandusky

Plum Brook Station in Sandusky offers top-notch facilities, scientists, engineers, and technicians that are critical to NASA's success – and with aerospace as our nation's number one manufacturing export, this success means jobs. In April, Sen. Brown met with workers and toured Plum Brook's Space Power and B2 facilities, applauding Plum Brook's past successes and future promise for projects in the private sector, military, and NASA spheres. In March, at a U.S. Senate Appropriations subcommittee hearing, Sen. Brown questioned NASA Administrator Charles F. Bolden over NASA mission and resources decisions that affect both Lewis Field in Cleveland and Plum Brook Station in Sandusky, and urged Bolden to ensure that Plum Brook's facilities are fully utilized.

Announcing Workforce Development Training Funds for the Long-Term Unemployed

Training and education for the long-term unemployed is an investment in Ohio's workforce that helps not only the individual participants but strengthens the economy as a whole. In February, Sen. Brown announced \$5 million in new U.S. Department of Labor funding to train 300 jobless Ohioans at Northwest State Community College in Archbold for careers in information technology, a field with emerging job opportunities in the region. Jobless workers can attend a 16-week information technology course, after which students will be placed with employers for an 18-week apprenticeship program.

Sen. Brown is working to tailor workforce development to the needs of regional, high-growth industries so that more workers can receive placements and more businesses could be attracted to a region based on a "clusters" approach. His bipartisan *Strengthening Employment Clusters to Organize Regional Success Act* would organize stakeholders connected to a regional industry, including business and labor leaders, education and training providers, and local workforce and education system administrators, to develop plans for growing that industry. The bill addresses the disparity between high unemployment rates and a shortage of skilled workers for many emerging industries.

Touting Research and Development at Owens-Illinois

To help American manufacturing grow, Sen. Brown has championed legislation to promote research and innovation that can help create jobs here at home. In October, he visited the global headquarters of Owens-Illinois in Perrysburg to tour its lab, meet with workers, and discuss his bill, the *21st Century Investment Act of 2012*, which would expand the research and development (R&D) tax credit and support nearly one million good-paying American jobs. Owens-Illinois recently announced plans to open a new 18,000 square foot R&D center in Northwest Ohio that will create 45 jobs. With a stronger R&D tax credit, more companies can expand and hire workers in Ohio.

Strengthening Trade Enforcement to Protect Northwest Ohio Jobs

Defending American Manufacturing of Appliances

Ohio companies can compete with anyone in the world, but unfairly-subsidized imports from foreign countries harm our ability to innovate and compete. After visiting the Clyde Whirlpool plant and meeting with workers in June, Sen. Brown sent a letter to the U.S. Commerce Department asking the agency to enforce trade laws so that companies like Whirlpool are guaranteed a level playing field on which to compete.

Five of Whirlpool Corporation's nine U.S. manufacturing plants are located in Ohio. Whirlpool has brought jobs to Ohio from overseas, and more than 80 percent of its products sold in America are made in the U.S. In December 2011, Whirlpool filed a case with the Commerce Department regarding the dumping of large residential washers, made in South Korea and Mexico, into the U.S. market.



Sen. Brown testified before the U.S. International Trade Commission (USITC) in December on behalf of Ohio's Whirlpool workers. The USITC held a hearing to determine whether the domestic industry was harmed due to unfairly dumped imports of washing machines made by companies in South Korea. Import duties play a major role in protecting Ohio jobs, leveling the playing field, and ensuring that America's trading partners play by the rules.

Supporting Northwest Ohio's Solar Industry

The Solar Energy Industries Association named Ohio as one of the top states for solar manufacturing capacity in the country. Northwest Ohio is a leader in Ohio's solar energy economy, but Ohio manufacturers are struggling to compete in an unfair global market. In particular, illegal Chinese trade practices have resulted in the dumping of crystalline silicon solar cells at far below fair value into the U.S. market. Sen. Brown wrote to President Obama in December 2011 expressing his support for a petition filed by a coalition of U.S. solar

manufacturers with the U.S. Commerce Department and International Trade Commission seeking relief from illegal Chinese trade practices. In May, the Commerce Department announced its decision to impose tariffs on unfairly subsidized solar panels from China, a move that Sen. Brown applauded.

That same month, Sen. Brown launched a tough proposal to loosen China's grip on the global solar panel market. The proposal would bar Chinese-made solar panels from qualifying for the 30 percent tax credit that U.S. individuals and businesses receive for purchasing and installing solar panels in their homes and businesses. Currently, the IRS provides tax incentives for all solar panels sold and installed in the United States, no matter where they are made.

Standing Up for American Auto Jobs Against Unfair Competition

The auto industry is helping turn our economy around by reviving manufacturing across the nation, but its success is hampered when countries like China set unfair tariffs on American-made vehicles. Duties placed by the Chinese government affect more than 80 percent of American auto exports to China, including vehicles like Jeeps made in Toledo and Acuras made in Marysville. Sen. Brown sent a bipartisan letter to United States Trade Representative Ron Kirk asking him for action against China's decision to apply unfair tariffs on American-made vehicles, and in July applauded the Obama Administration's enforcement against China at the World Trade Organization.

Helping Northwest Ohio Small Businesses Grow and Add Jobs

Highlighting Northwest Ohio's Small Business Manufacturing Growth



The federal auto rescue and expanded loan resources through the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) provided a lifeline for scores of companies in the auto supply chain. In April, Sen. Brown visited one such company, American Manufacturing of Toledo. An auto parts supplier once on the brink of closure due to the credit crunch and the downturn in the American auto industry, American Manufacturing is now more successful than ever thanks to the auto rescue and loans backed by the SBA. At one point down to just a handful of employees,

American Manufacturing has been able to fill more than 100 jobs in the last several years, and is looking to add still more positions as a result of increased demand from the Big Three carmakers. Sen. Brown met with employees, toured the company's facilities, and outlined how the company was saved from the brink of closure. American Manufacturing is just one of the many small and mid-sized parts suppliers that would have vanished had the American auto industry been allowed to collapse.

Promoting Tourism and Economic Development in Northwest Ohio

Ohio has a strong tourism industry but more can be done to make sure visitors know about all of Ohio's world-class attractions. During a working conference call in July, Sen. Brown discussed strategies for boosting Ohio's tourism industry with representatives from Ohio's major tourism destinations, including Lake Erie Shores and Islands and Kalahari Resorts. They were also joined by Brand USA, a new public-private entity that seeks to bring more visitors to the United States and create additional economic activity and jobs in places like Ohio.

Fostering Initiatives that Nurture Small Businesses

Small businesses and small towns are essential to our economy, and the USDA's Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program is designed to help both thrive and grow. In June, Sen. Brown announced new resources for programs benefiting small businesses and communities in Northwest Ohio. Ohio Northern University in Hardin County received support for its Entrepreneurship Program, which provides technical support for 20 local businesses, while WSOS Community Action Commission, based in Sandusky County, received support to establish an "economic gardening" initiative to nurture another 20 small businesses across fourteen Northwest Ohio counties.

Building Northwest Ohio Infrastructure and Transportation

Marking the Passage of New Tour Bus Safety Law

Following a 2007 bus crash that killed seven people, including five members of the Bluffton University baseball team, Sen. Brown worked alongside Ohio families to introduce bipartisan legislation addressing tour bus safety. In July, Sen. Brown joined John and Joy Betts—whose son David died in the Bluffton accident—a national safety advocate, and bus drivers to hail a new law that will require safety belts, stronger seating systems, and enhanced commercial driver training to improve tour bus safety.



Sen. Brown fought to include this bipartisan legislation as part of the highway bill reauthorization that was signed into law this year. The *Motorcoach Enhanced Safety Act* is based on National Transportation Safety Board recommendations, some of which were first proposed in 1968. The enactment of this legislation reflects a five-year struggle alongside the families of students who lost their lives in the crash involving the Bluffton University baseball team.

In December, Sen. Brown applauded the opening of the David Betts Memorial Baseball Diamond and delivered a speech on the floor of the Senate honoring the life of David Betts.

Working to Advance the Blanchard River Flood Mitigation Study

The Blanchard River has repeatedly spilled over its banks, causing severe flooding in the City of Findlay and the Village of Ottawa. In 2007, the area suffered its most damaging flood event in

nearly 100 years, forcing hundreds of residents to evacuate and halting operations at area businesses. The flood caused \$50 million in damages in Findlay and \$20 million in damages in Ottawa. Private sector and community partners have already raised over \$6 million for the flood reduction project.

Sen. Brown has worked tirelessly to advance the Blanchard River flood mitigation project, which is critically important to homeowners and small business owners in Hancock and Putnam Counties. In April and December, he met in Washington with members of the Blanchard River Flood Reduction Project Coalition, and in May he sent a bipartisan letter to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers asking the Corps to prioritize efforts to enact a permanent flood control solution on the Blanchard River.

In December, Sen. Brown joined Sen. Rob Portman, Reps. Bob Latta and Jim Jordan to send a letter to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works urging assistance in expediting the Blanchard River Flood Reduction Project. The U.S. Army Corps' completion of the Chief's Report is crucial to expediting a solution to flood of the Blanchard River.

Calling for Use of the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund for Lake Erie Ports

Ohio's ports and harbors are critical for our state's economic health. In August, Sen. Brown called on the federal Office of Management and Budget to utilize the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund to begin repairs on Ohio's Lake Erie harbors. Harbor Maintenance Tax funds have previously been used in large part for purposes unrelated to ports or harbors. Sen. Brown urged that fund resources be spent on necessary but costly repairs that will support Ohio industry and attract new private investments to the area.

Improving Public Transit in Sandusky County

Whether seniors need to visit the doctor or workers just need a ride to the job site, all Ohioans deserve access to reliable public transportation. A representative from Sen. Brown's office attended a ribbon-cutting for the new TRIPS Public Transit Facility in Fremont. Thanks to key federal investments, the new TRIPS Public Transit Facility will help improve the coordination of rides and public transit options for Sandusky County.

Supporting Servicemembers, Veterans, and Law Enforcement

Pressing for New Resources and Support for Northwest Ohio Law Enforcement

Law enforcement officers put their lives on the line every day to protect local citizens, and they deserve protection and support in return. Sen. Brown has pushed for resources to give law enforcement better tools to protect their communities and each other. In January, Sen. Brown joined the mother of a Toledo detective who was killed on the job in 2007 – as well as the City of Oregon police chief and President of the Ohio Fraternal Order of Police – to outline legislation that would create a national "Blue Alert" system aimed at apprehending criminals who injure or kill law enforcement officers serving in the line of duty. The system would be modeled after the "Amber Alert" system currently used to notify the public about a missing child. The alert system would be used to disseminate critical information about the suspect to law enforcement agencies, the public, and the media.

With Northwest Ohio bordering both Michigan and Indiana, a national Blue Alert system would help track down even those criminals who attempt to flee to other states. In a state like Ohio, which borders five other states, a national Blue Alert system could mean the difference between capturing an assailant and having him escape.

Another challenge that law enforcement officers face is the scourge of prescription drug theft and abuse in local communities. Sen. Brown has pushed for more resources for law enforcement to combat the growing problem of prescription drug theft. In August, Sen. Brown joined a Toledo pharmacy owner to outline legislation to crack down on drug burglaries, stiffen penalties for prescription drug theft, and provide law enforcement with additional tools to tackle the problem.

Connecting Northwest Ohio Veterans with New Employment Opportunities

Sen. Brown was an original cosponsor of the *VOW to Hire Heroes Act*, a veterans' jobs law enacted in November 2011 that created the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP). VRAP is a training initiative that provides unemployed veterans between the ages of 35 and 60 the opportunity to pursue training for new careers in high demand occupations.



In August, Sen. Brown joined veterans and workforce training officials at The Source, Lucas County's employment center, to encourage eligible Ohio veterans to apply for the VRAP program. Sen. Brown was joined by Kenneth Taylor, an unemployed Northwest Ohio veteran who will train for a new career at Owens Community College; Eric Walker, Director of The Source Northwest Ohio; and Lucas County Commissioners Pete Gerken, Tina Skeldon Wozniak, and Carol Contrada. With limited spaces available in the program nationwide, Sen. Brown urged veterans to apply as quickly as possible.

Hiring Northwest Ohio Veterans as Law Enforcement Officers

An updated "Vets to COPS" program through the U.S. Department of Justice offers help for police departments and veterans alike by providing funding to allow law enforcement agencies to hire or rehire career law enforcement officers who are military veterans.

In June, Sen. Brown announced that Northwest Ohio police departments in both urban and rural communities received funding through the "Vets to COPS" program in 2012. The Village of

Republic in Seneca County received an award for an officer, and the City of Toledo received funding to hire 15 new officers.

Presenting Earned Medals to a World War II Veteran in Sandusky

Ohio's veterans have made invaluable contributions to our fight for global security and democracy, but often do not receive the services and honors they earned in combat. Sen. Brown has presented overdue or replacement military medals to dozens of veterans around the state, including Delbert Cole, a 93-year-old World War II veteran living at the Ohio Veterans Home in Sandusky. In January, Sen. Brown presented Mr. Cole with 11 war medals during a ceremony at the Ohio Veterans Home. Sen. Brown's office secured the replacement and new medals to present to Mr. Cole and his family. Among the awards was a Bronze Star, given to World War II soldiers who displayed courage in combat. Cole began his military career six months before the Pearl Harbor bombing in December 1941.



Announcing Confirmation of a New Judge for the U.S. Northern District Court

The Northern District of Ohio's federal bench welcomed a new judge to its ranks when Jeffrey Helmick of Toledo was confirmed by the U.S. Senate in June. Sen. Brown applauded the confirmation of Helmick, which came almost two years after Sen. Brown and then-Sen. Voinovich submitted Helmick's name for consideration to the President, following the recommendation of a 17-member bipartisan judicial selection commission convened by Sens. Brown and Voinovich.

Sen. Brown introduced Helmick at the Senate's Judiciary Committee hearing in February, at which the Committee approved Helmick's nomination prior to consideration by the full Senate. Following the Senate confirmation vote, Sen. Brown spoke at Judge Helmick's October investiture ceremony in Toledo, commending his professionalism, his commitment to the law and to justice, and his demonstrated patience.

Protecting and Supporting Northwest Ohio Consumers

Keeping College Affordable

More than 382,000 Ohio college students, including 25,000 in Lucas County alone, would have been forced to pay significantly more for their student loans if the interest rate for federally-subsidized Stafford loans had doubled as scheduled on July 1, 2012. Sen. Brown joined students at Owens Community College in Perrysburg in June to call for passage of legislation to block the scheduled interest rate hike. In late June, just before the rate increase from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent would have gone into effect, Congress passed Sen. Brown's *Stop the Student Loan Interest Rate Hike Act of 2012*, averting the increase.

Convening Workshops to Protect Seniors from Scams and Students from Bullying

A variety of federal agencies offer educational resources to help protect vulnerable citizens. In April, Sen. Brown's office convened workshops around the state with the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to educate senior citizens and those who work with them about avoiding frauds and scams that particularly target seniors. The FTC is charged with helping to prevent fraud, deception, and unfair business practices in the marketplace. Representatives from the Consumer Credit Counseling Service also participated. Northwest Ohio workshops were held at senior centers in Norwalk and Toledo.

Just as the elderly are sometimes targeted, young people sometimes find themselves victims. In May, Sen. Brown's office convened a series of workshops aimed to help schools address bullying. A "Combating Teenage Bullying in Your Schools" seminar was held in Bowling Green in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Attorney's Office, U.S. Federal Trade Commission, the Anti-Defamation League, Gay and Lesbian Education Network, and Equality Ohio.

Supporting Social Security, Medicare, and Healthcare

Tackling the Drug Shortage Crisis

Americans facing serious illness, such as cancer, should be able to focus on treatment of their disease without worrying about whether there is enough medicine available to help them get better. Shockingly, patients sometimes face delayed treatment or are denied life-saving medications altogether due to drug shortages. In February, Sen. Brown joined a Northwest Ohio lung cancer patient at the University of Toledo Medical Center to outline a bill that would address drug shortages. The patient had to change chemotherapy drugs twice – enduring three different treatments – as a result of drug shortages.



Sen. Brown's bill, the *Preserving Access to Life-Saving Medications Act*, would trigger an alert to the FDA before a possible drug shortage. The FDA would be required to provide updates to the public about potential shortages, allowing doctors, pharmacists, and patients to work together to avoid any interruption in care.

Urging U.S. EPA to work with Clyde Community in Investigating the "Cancer Cluster"

The Clyde community deserves answers regarding the cancer cluster that has sickened too many of its children. After reports indicated the presence of toxic chemicals at a park in Clyde—a town that is the home of a child "cancer cluster," Sen. Brown urged the U.S. Environmental

Protection Agency (EPA) to work with the Clyde community and the current park owners to investigate the site.

A cancer cluster, as defined by the National Center for Environmental Health at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), is a “greater-than-expected number of cancer cases that occurs within a group of people in a geographic area over a defined period of time.” Since 1996, at least 37 children within a 12-mile wide circle of Clyde have been diagnosed with brain and central nervous system tumors, lymphoma, leukemia, and other forms of cancer. Four of these children have passed away.

In a letter to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson in November, Sen. Brown applauded the EPA for its diligence in testing sites in and around Clyde, but urged the agency to do more to keep families informed about the results.

Expanding Health Care Services for Northwest Ohio Residents

Community health centers play a vital role in helping Ohioans obtain access to primary and preventive health care services. Neighborhood Health Association, Inc., a medical center serving Lucas County, and Health Partners of Western Ohio in Allen County received new resources from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to support and develop primary care health services. These new federal resources will help Neighborhood Health Association, Inc. and Health Partners of Western Ohio provide affordable and accessible health care to more of Toledo’s children, seniors, and parents.

Supporting Northwest Ohio’s Agricultural and Rural Economy

Supporting Northwest Ohio Farmers

Listening to Northwest Ohio Farmers

With one in seven Ohio jobs tied to the food and agriculture industry, there is a large, diverse, and vibrant agricultural industry in Ohio. In October, representatives from Sen. Brown’s office held a roundtable discussion in Bowling Green to hear from local farmers as well as to provide an update on the farm bill and discuss its provisions and possibilities. Steve Maurer, Executive Director of the Ohio Farm Service Agency, also attended the discussion to answer questions on drought and USDA resources. Participants included commodity farmers, specialty organic crop farmers, local food advocates, nutrition program representatives, health care professionals, and local government officials.

Assisting Northwest Ohio Farmers During Summer Drought

Many Ohio farmers and agricultural-related businesses found their livelihoods threatened by serious drought this summer – a drought that led the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to designate all 88 counties in the state as disaster areas. Sen. Brown was pleased to announce a number of resources provided by federal agencies to assist Ohioans affected by the drought. In July, new federal assistance was made available to small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, and non-profit organizations in Defiance, Fulton, Lucas, and Williams counties that experienced financial loss due to the drought. The Small Business Administration (SBA) announced additional resources for Fulton, Williams, Defiance, Paulding, and Van Wert

Counties later in the summer. In August, new USDA resources were made available for 24 Ohio counties. In September, Sen. Brown reported that additional assistance would be made available for farmers and agriculture-related businesses in Northwest Ohio's Ottawa, Erie, Lucas, Sandusky, Wood, Defiance, Paulding, Van Wert, and Williams Counties.

In June, Sen. Brown applauded Senate passage of a farm bill that would save taxpayers \$23 billion while creating jobs, boosting rural development, and extending critical disaster programs such as the drought relief assistance Ohio farmers and agricultural businesses depended on after the 2012 drought. The farm bill passed by the Senate included an amendment introduced by Sen. Brown that would fund critical USDA Rural Development programs that help Ohio communities update wastewater and sewer infrastructure systems, provide access to capital for Ohio agricultural producers and small businesses, and provide technical assistance to beginning farmers and ranchers.

Protecting Lake Erie

Two of the greatest threats to the health of Lake Erie are algae blooms and the invasive species Asian carp, and Sen. Brown has championed legislation to address both. In October, Sen. Brown announced Ohio would receive two grants totaling nearly \$1 million to protect and maintain the physical integrity of many of Ohio's bodies of water, including Lake Erie. The University of Toledo received funding to use DNA for early detection of high-risk invasive species, such as Asian carp.

Preventing Asian Carp from Reaching Lake Erie



An Asian carp invasion would cause irreparable damage to Ohio's multi-million dollar fishing and boating industries, and Sen. Brown continues to push for aggressive action to prevent an invasion. In June, Sen. Brown announced passage of the bipartisan *Stop Invasive Species Act*, of which he was an original cosponsor. The Act requires expedited creation of a plan to block Asian carp from entering the Great Lakes through a number of rivers and tributaries across the Great Lakes region. The Great Lakes, including Lake Erie, are dangerously vulnerable to an Asian carp invasion. This legislation requires the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to submit to Congress an expedited action plan with options for stopping the carp from penetrating the Great Lakes across 18 possible points of entry.

After the discovery of Asian carp environmental DNA in the Sandusky Bay and the Sandusky River in August, Sen. Brown renewed his push for hydrological separation as the best solution for keeping Asian carp out of Lake Erie.

In September, Sen. Brown announced support for the *Great Lakes Ecosystem Protection Act of 2012*, bipartisan legislation aimed at preserving the Great Lakes and bolstering economic growth

throughout the Great Lakes region by protecting the Lakes from a variety of ecological threats and invasive species. The Act would authorize the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), an interagency effort, to target the most significant problems in the region and jumpstart restoration efforts at a level of \$475 million annually, and would reauthorize the *Great Lakes Legacy Act*.

In December, Sen. Brown and Sen. Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania announced the introduction of bipartisan legislation that would help prevent the invasion of Asian carp to the Ohio River basin. The *Strategic Response to Asian Carp Act* will enable the federal government to have a more effective partnership with state and local entities that are fighting to end the spread of Asian carp. For years, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative has helped clean up and keep Lake Erie healthy for generations of Ohioans to enjoy. Sen. Brown also urged the Obama Administration to designate robust funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) in the president's 2014 budget request.

Protecting Lake Erie from Algal Blooms

Following last year's blue-green algae bloom in the Western Lake Erie Basin, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) directed new federal resources to help protect the Lake. In March, Sen. Brown joined USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack and other officials to announce \$2 million to help farmers in designated parts of Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana prevent phosphorus, a contributor to algae growth, from entering Western Lake Erie basin waterways. The funds will help farmers take measures to help limit phosphorus losses from agricultural operations, while helping support the millions of jobs that are generated through the hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation industry in the Western Lake Erie Basin.

Working Toward a Healthy Grand Lake St. Marys

Grand Lake St. Marys in Mercer and Auglaize counties has been affected by toxic blue-green algae that has left the lake unsafe for swimming, contributed to a decline in tourism, and reduced economic activity and local business in the area. Sen. Brown has been working with local farmers, community leaders, and federal officials to take steps toward revitalizing Grand Lake St. Marys and the recreation, tourism, and boating industries that it supports.

In March, Sen. Brown announced new federal resources to help improve the water quality of Grand Lake St. Marys. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provided \$1 million in federal funding for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) efforts in the Grand Lake St. Marys watershed. EQIP offers technical assistance for farmers to plant cover crops, build manure storage facilities, install filter strips, and complete other conservation measures that keep phosphorus out of Grand Lake St. Marys. Studies on Grand Lake St. Marys have shown that excess phosphorus loading of the lake has been the primary reason for toxic algae blooms during the past few summers.

Sen. Brown, the first Senator from Ohio to serve on the Agriculture Committee in 40 years, has worked during the past three years to secure water quality conservation resources for Grand Lake St. Marys that encourage farmers to use best practices – including cover crops and buffer strips – that, in the long run, will improve health of the lake.